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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OCA FILE DCI/CA

Director of Congressional Affairs

OCA 87-6073
15 December 1987

NOTE TO THE DIRECTOR

At last Tuesday's staff meeting, you described the four items of the package you planned to send to Congress and asked whether there were any other subjects that needed cauterizing.

Covert action can also benefit from cauterizing. As a result, you could consider sending the attached Memorandum as a fifth item.

STAT

Dave Gries

Attachment

Distribution:
Original - Addressee
1 - DDCI
1 - ExDir
1 - ER
1 - OCA Record
1 - DDG Chrono
1 - D/LEG/OCA

DOCA/DDGries/mlg (15 December 1987)

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SUBJECT: Review and Approval Procedures for Special Activities

3. Our goal in these programs, however, is not just to do them right, but to do them well. We must be constantly alert for ways to improve our effectiveness, and to ensure that the programs accomplish their intended objectives in a timely and efficient manner. The management and supervision of our special activities must remain with the Directorate of Operations. But I believe that the review process can be structured in a way, consistent with security needs, that enables us to draw on the full range of professional advice and expertise that is available within the Agency.

4. The Covert Action Review Group currently plays an integral role in our review process. The members of this group--or some other suitable committee we may wish to establish--should sit not just in their individual capacities as managers of their respective divisions, but as my senior policy advisors on matters relating to special activities. I expect them to examine these proposals carefully, to explore the full range of issues involved, and to identify any matters that require my personal attention. A memorandum will be submitted with each Finding and MON forwarded to me for my consideration, reflecting the committee's views on the proposal. This memorandum should include a recommendation for approval or disapproval, recommended changes or amendments to the proposal, and any reservations or dissenting views by individual members. It should also highlight any key issues that warrant special consideration by me or the President, concerning either approval or implementation of the program.

5. I have instructed [redacted] to prepare draft regulations as outlined above and submit them to me within 30 days. The drafting process will be coordinated with the Deputy Directors and other officials of the Agency as appropriate, and there will be ample opportunity for everyone to express their views before the final product is adopted.

STAT

William H. Webster

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ER 3866-87

24 November 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJET: Review and Approval Procedures for Special Activities

1. Special activities constitute a small percentage of the total work of this Agency, but they receive considerable attention. Perhaps this is due to the secrecy of these operations and our inability to explain to the public what it is that we do in furtherance of foreign policy objectives overseas. Secrecy is suspect in an open society, but it is often essential to the successful conduct of our operations abroad. Unlike law enforcement activities, however, which also are conducted in secret, covert operations are not scrutinized by the courts. They are reviewed by appropriate committees of Congress and they are sometimes discussed in the press but, for the most part, information concerning these activities remains closely held within the Government. This places a very special obligation on those of us within the Agency who have the responsibility for planning and conducting covert operations. We must ensure that these activities are lawful, appropriate to foreign policy objectives and, if revealed, that they would make sense to the American public.

2. To further these goals, I intend to establish procedures within the Agency to govern the review and approval of all Presidential Findings and Memoranda of Notification. Our purpose here is not to create new constraints on our activities that might unduly interfere with our ability to carry out special activities. Limitations on our conduct are adequately covered in the laws, in Executive Order 12333, and in internal regulations of the Agency. Rather, these procedures are intended to establish a framework for discussion within the Agency to ensure that relevant considerations are taken into account and informed judgments made about the benefits, costs, risks and, ultimately, the propriety of our activities. Although our conduct in the international arena is not governed by the same standards that apply on the domestic scene, there are norms and values that must be respected. The standards are difficult to define, but I am confident that through careful, systematic and candid discussion by senior management officials of this Agency we can reach the proper decision in these matters.

DCI EXEC REG

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